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17 March 1970

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting of the National Disaster Support Task Group

1. The initial meeting of the National Disaster Support Task Group was convened at 1400 hours on 17 February 1970 at the USGS facility in Reston, Virginia. [] was present for CIA and I was present for NPIC. Other attendees were:

2. After [] welcomed the group to the Reston USGS Facility, [], Committee Chairman, began the meeting by reading the letter written to the members of the National Disaster Support Task Group by []. A copy of that letter is attached. As stated, the aim of the Task Group is to establish an altering system in order to prepare for disaster coverage acquisition, locate sources for obtaining the needed coverage, formulate an interpretation component and institute a dissemination procedure for both raw and analyzed data. [] mentioned that an internal OEP group would be conducting a parallel effort, the significance of which was not mentioned. It is intended that our Task Group will have a plan of disaster support implemented

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by the spring flood season. This means we must be ready in six to eight weeks.

3. An informal briefing pertaining to 'Command Control Centers' was presented by [redacted]

[redacted] This is the group that established, for Mayor Washington, the command center during the April riots in the District of Columbia. It was their contention that within the Civil Defense network are established command posts which could serve in a similar capacity during civil emergencies. It is a waste to have these emergency posts standing by waiting for a war situation and not make use of them for non-military emergencies. The point was made that such utilization would better prepare the command post personnel for a military activity since such civil situations would present a real-life exercise.

Regarding the establishment of a national disaster support program, it was [redacted] opinion that a small nucleus of interested persons was needed to start the ball rolling. It was pointed out that they were addressing such a nucleus. With this in mind, the first problem is to determine whom the disaster support system is to be tailored to. It appears that this is [redacted] Director of the Office of Emergency Preparedness, who receives his responsibility from the President.

The next step is to survey our own group to determine which present resources might fit into the program. Procedures of action should be established and funding provided by a charter. [redacted] briefers suggested that positive procedures of action, a communications network, delegation of responsibility, and an authoritative command chain be formulated.

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5. [] requested that the Support Task Group members consider, prior to the next meeting, the availability of the following resources within their own agencies.

a. What is available in present command and control nets?

b. What procedures are necessary to activate these nets? If special action is required, what is the cost?

c. What authority is required for network activation?

d. Once an emergency situation is declared, what latitude of agency action will be permitted?

e. Since different disaster situations require different methods of analysis and action, it must be determined to what degree each agency will participate per specific type of emergency. This tasks each member with determining what types of disasters his agency has interest in and will actively support. This is directly related to agency functions and responsibilities.

The next step is to classify disasters as to type, marry this with agency interest/responsibility and determine the required action. This done, a plan of attack and mutual support will have been established.

6. [] spoke on a retrospective look at the Federal action taken to combat the devastation of Hurricane Camille. In order to ascertain the extent of damage, the USAF flew a reconnaissance mission to acquire the imagery, interpreters at Reston, Va. accomplished the readout and the information was forwarded to the President. On the surface, this appears to be a simple,

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straightforward, efficient approach. However, when one looks into the subsurface details, he forms a different opinion. In the total Federal Camille disaster assistance effort, numerous agencies such as Dept. of Agriculture, NASA, and Corps. of Engineers, each had coverage flown resulting in a duplication of effort. [redacted] mentioned that in providing the Office of Emergency Preparedness with the requested coverage, the USAF employed a panoramic camera system while metric quality photography was the actual need. [redacted] countered with the statement that system type had not been specified and the Air Force had used the closest available reconnaissance aircraft. It was also stated that processing and printing of the material had not been accomplished in a timely manner and the information distribution to the White House was not handled in an expedient fashion. It is the aim of our Task Group to correct these problems. The question we must address is - Who is going to get what to whom when.

7. Concerning the role of CIA and NPIC in supporting the National Disaster Effort, I spoke with [redacted] following the meeting and he indicated that we wait and learn what the directly concerned agencies have available as a course of action prior to any commitment of CIA/NPIC resources. The next meeting is scheduled at 1300 hours at Reston, Va. on 9 March 1970.

[redacted]
Section I
Image Evaluation Branch
APSD/TSSG/NPIC

Attachment: a/s

Distribution:

- Cy 1 - NPIC/TSSG/APSD, w/a
- 2 - NPIC/TSSG/APSD, w/a
- 3 - NPIC/PPBS. Attn: [redacted]

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Attachment to
[REDACTED]

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February 9, 1970

TO: Members

SUBJECT: National Disaster Support Task Group

The attempt to support Hurricane Camille damage assessment by use of aerial photography demonstrated pointedly the need for a coordinated interagency plan for the efficient collection and dissemination of imagery and information to support national disaster applications. During the Camille disaster overlapping photography was collected without coordination by the Corps of Engineers, U. S. Air Force, ESSA, NASA and others. In addition to the redundant effort in collection neither the photography nor derived information could be made available to national planners nor local officials, both Federal and State, in a sufficiently time-urgent manner.

As a result of this experience I am recommending that a task group be formed to achieve implementation of a coordinated interagency plan for the collection and dissemination of photography and related information in support of national disasters; I believe that such a plan should be drawn up and tested as soon as possible. The spring flood season might furnish a suitable opportunity for the testing of this plan.

In an effort to meet this goal of a coordinated plan by Spring 1970, [REDACTED] Director of the Office of Emergency Preparedness, at my request, has nominated [REDACTED], OEP, [REDACTED] as the Chairman of the Task Group. In order to commence this study as soon as possible I would appreciate designation of your representatives to this panel by February 10, 1970, so that we may soon after define the scope and duration of this important matter. It is anticipated the panel's first meeting will be February 16, 1970.

While the need for a coordinated plan for national disaster is urgently required now, the benefits of such a mechanism of coordinated agency planning are also applicable in a routine way in the broader earth resources program. I would expect that the procedure worked out to use efficiently the imagery acquired through current channels would be considered as

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a model of the data reduction concept for the earth resources program. Later, I believe we will wish to consider as appropriate such matters as the joint agency staffing of a task group facility locally and nationally as required; automated data processing systems; large volume data storage, retrieval and dissemination system; and others.

I welcome your advice and cooperation in this matter.

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